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Atari Online News, Etc.
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Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"
Rob Mahlert -- Web site
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

Fred Horvat

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A-ONE #0833 08/18/06

~ Dell Battery Recall! ~ People Are Talking! ~ New Blog Software!
~ ACEC Atari Swap Meet! ~ Video Games Over TV? ~ Zero Day Attackers!
~ Video Games Healthy!? ~ YouTube Suffers Outage ~ French Targets eBay!

~ Google Offers Coupons! ~ 25 Greatest PCs Ever! ~ Fight To Ban Bully!

-* Cecile Released Under GPL! *-
-* AOL Gets To Dig for Gold, Literally *-
-* Judge Orders Online Sale of Unabomber Goods -

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->From the Editor's Keyboard "Saying it like it is!"
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Well, thankfully, last week was a great one because this one turned out to be traumatic. A dear friend of mine - the wife of one of my supervisors (prior to my "retirement") - passed away earlier in the week after a 3-year battle with cancer. She was a tough young woman who was very stubborn and refused to give up without a fight. Well, she finally lost that fight, albeit mercifully. During her treatments, the both of them taught all of us a valuable lesson: live life to its fullest while you can. And, they did. Life is just too short to not. Ironically, my father turned 86 years young this week. Amazing.

On a different tack, we here in Massachusetts had a sales tax free "holiday" this past weekend. Most purchases under a price cap were exempt from sales tax! We've had a few of these in the past but I've really never taken advantage of them - at least with regard to high-sticker items. We decided to shop around for a new PC for me, and grab one if the price turned out to be right. Well, we found one and picked it up. Between the sales tax and the rebates, we saved almost $700! This PC reminds me of when I upgraded my Atari computer, from a 1040ST to the Falcon! What a difference! And, our DSL service is working more reliably lately, so it's turning out to be a win-win situation. It's too bad that the Falcon was the end of the line for Atari. I would love to be able to see how far an Atari computer would have evolved had Atari stayed competitive. or at least stayed afloat and continued development. Well, that's all history long past. At least I can still continue to work with my Falcon even if I have to find some shortcuts and workarounds to be able to do what I need to do!

Until next time...

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Cecile Released Under GPL

Hi all,

Originally distributed on the Centek website, Cecile is a hard disk driver for Atari or compatible systems. David Godec has kindly decided to release the sources for Cecile under the General Public License, GPL. After the sources for AHDI surfaced recently, the sources for two

Atari hard disk driver are now available. However, Cecile is the first one to be released under GPL.

To read more, please visit The Orphaned Projects Page:

http://topp.atari-users.net/

Regards,

/Joakim

http://xaaes.atariforge.net
http://topp.atari-users.net
http://www.ataricq.org

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->A-ONE User Group Notes! - Meetings, Shows, and Info!
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ACEC Atari Swap Meet!

Well folks, it is getting to that time of year again. The Atari Computer Enthusiasts of Columbus are holding their annual Atari Swap meet and Sale. It is going to be on Saturday September the 9th. It will be at the same time and place as before. For further information please go to acec.atari.org

Hope to see you there.

Link: http://acec.atari.org/

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PEOPLE ARE TALKING
compiled by Joe Mirando
joe@atarinews.org

[Editor’s note: Due to personal issues, there will not be a column this week.]

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->In This Week's Gaming Section - New Game To Revive Star Trek?
"""""""""""""""""""""""""""""""" Dirge of Cerberus - FF VII
Battling Release of 'Bully'!
And much more!

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!
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Shatner Hopes New Game Will Revive "Trek"

The Starship Enterprise is in trouble and, as usual, Capt. James T. Kirk has a plan to save it.

William Shatner, who played the swashbuckling spacefarer in the "Star Trek" television series and movies, is voicing Kirk in a new computer game in the face of ebbing interest in the "Star Trek" franchise.

"Star Trek: Legacy," due out in October, will let players steer more than 60 starships - spanning all five of the franchise's live-action TV series - into combat against foes such as the militant Klingons and the all-assimilating Borg.

"The interest in 'Star Trek' has waned in the last couple years," Shatner said in a telephone interview. "It's been around a long time, it's a staple of American life and I think we need something new and different in 'Star Trek."'

In addition to Shatner, the actors who sat in the captain chairs in the other four shows, such as Patrick Stewart from "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and Kate Mulgrew from "Star Trek: Voyager," have also agreed to voice lines in the game.

With the exit from TV last year of "Star Trek: Enterprise," and the next feature film not expected until 2008, some fans fret that Starfleet is showing vulnerability - not to photon torpedoes and cloaking devices but to audience apathy.

Shatner, who said he doesn't play video games but has a grandson who is keen to teach him, hopes the medium can keep the "Star Trek" flame burning.

"Once again, it's renewing itself," Shatner said.

The first "Star Trek" television show, created by Gene Roddenberry and starring Shatner, aired in 1966.

In recent years Shatner's TV acting career has heated up as he won Emmys for playing eccentric lawyer Denny Crane in two shows, "Boston Legal" and "The Practice." He last lent his voice to a video game in 1997's "Star Trek: Starfleet Academy," according to the Internet Movie Database.

"I couldn't imagine someone else playing Captain Kirk, even in a video

game, so I kind of got a little territorial," he said.

Apart from "Legacy," other upcoming "Trek" titles include a space combat game for handheld devices, as well as an online PC game that will let huge numbers of players seek out new life and new civilizations simultaneously.

The rush of titles comes from new video game publishers taken on by Star Trek franchise owner CBS Studios Inc. after the previous one, Activision Inc., sued CBS' former parent, Viacom, for failing to shoot new movies and TV shows it could use as the basis for new games.

"Star Trek: Legacy" is being published by Bethesda Softworks, which also was behind the hit fantasy role-playing game "The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion" for PCs and Microsoft Corp.'s Xbox 360 game console.

Dirge of Cerberus - Final Fantasy VII Explodes Onto Retail Shelves

Square Enix, Inc., the publisher of Square Enix interactive entertainment products in North America, announced Tuesday that Dirge of Cerberus - Final Fantasy VII - (Dirge of Cerberus) has shipped to retailers across the nation, exclusively for the PlayStation2 computer entertainment system. The blockbuster thrill ride from the creators of Final Fantasy VII comes fully loaded with all-new features and bonus content created exclusively for North American audiences.

"Creating the first action game in the beloved Final Fantasy series has been an exhilarating experience for us," said Yoshinori Kitase, Producer, Square Enix Co., Ltd. "Because the series, especially Final Fantasy VII, has enjoyed such a loyal following, we took special care with the direction for Dirge of Cerberus. In addition, we were sensitive to the difference between American and Japanese gamers, and made substantial changes to tailor the game to both regions. We hope the gamers will enjoy this new facet of the franchise and the continuation of the Final Fantasy VII legacy."

Breakout star Vincent Valentine returns in this adrenaline-fueled action game that propels players into the middle of an ongoing conflict that threatens all life on the planet. With his trusty triple-barreled Cerberus in hand, Vincent will shoot, fight and rage his way through the ranks of a menacing uprising - one that must be stopped at all costs. Featuring fast-paced gameplay from renowned producer Yoshinori Kitase and character designs from Tetsuya Nomura, Dirge of Cerberus offers a non-stop ride through the exhilarating world of Final Fantasy VII.

Numerous enhancements have been implemented in the North American release, including brand-new missions, a retooled camera system, and speedier action to keep up with American gamers. Fans will also have the opportunity to continue the adventure "on the go" with Dirge of Cerberus Lost Episode - Final Fantasy VII -, a mobile title set for release this summer.

Story:

Three years have passed since Meteor's devastating attack on the planet. After piecing together their shattered lives, people are terrorized yet again by sudden attacks stemming from a mysterious military organization known as "Deepground." Before Meteorfall, these soldiers formed one of Shinra's most secret projects - but with the destruction of Midgar, the

soldiers left below the town’s smoldering remains were forgotten. Vincent Valentine must now retaliate against this impending threat with his trusty Cerberus in hand.

Features:

* The first action title in the series delivers an entirely new collection of techniques and maneuvers exclusive to the North American release
* Tweaks and changes bring the game up to speed for North American audiences - faster gameplay, an enhanced camera system and tightened controls provide gamers with a tailor-made experience
* Extend the adventure with all-new bonus content that includes exclusive missions, character viewer, sound gallery and more
* Revisit memorable locations and see familiar faces from Final Fantasy VII
* Utilize a variety of weapons and unleash devastating melee combo attacks
* Customize and upgrade Vincent’s weapons, including handguns and machine guns, with five different varieties of parts that affect power, range, firing rate and more
* Fully voiced, cutting-edge CG cinematics in the renowned Square Enix style
* Continue the adventure on the go with the mobile game Dirge of Cerberus Lost Episode - Final Fantasy VII -

Dirge of Cerberus Lost Episode - Final Fantasy VII - tells the story three years after Meteorfall, where the original Final Fantasy VII ended, with Vincent Valentine struggling to save the world from Deepground, a mysterious army of bloodthirsty warriors. This action role-playing game will take advantage of all mobile gaming has to offer, allowing players to explore a sprawling world in Battlefield mode, and battle with Deepground soldiers in FPS Battle mode. Familiar features from FFVII, such as materia and limit break attacks, can also be used by Vincent to smash his foes.

Dirge of Cerberus is rated "T" for Teen. Please visit the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) Web site at www.esrb.com for more information about ratings. Dirge of Cerberus is available at North American retailers for the suggested retail price of $49.99(USD). Additional information on Dirge of Cerberus can be found at http://na.square-enix.com/dcff7/.

Tekken: Dark Resurrection Brings Fighting Fun to PSP

If you’ve never played a fighting game like Tekken: Dark Resurrection, there are a few important things to know.

As with most video games, hand-eye coordination is certainly important. But above all else, you need fingers of steel.

This new title for the PlayStation Portable often comes down to how long your poor digits can endure pounding buttons in quick, endless succession.

For a portable system that doesn’t have very many fighting games (or very many good games at all, for that matter), Dark Resurrection is a gorgeous, button-mashing extravaganza.

The gameplay is simple enough for novices to jump right into and enjoy,

yet the many combinations and special attacks will take a long time to master.

People who struggle with the sophisticated button slaps needed to win games like this will appreciate the practice mode, where I was able to hone my skills with minimal humiliation.

You begin by choosing from an array of warriors - there are dozens of oddball characters including a kangaroo and a panda, as well as more traditional human combatants. Each has special moves and fighting characteristics.

These battle royales play out in 3-D environments such as wolf-infested forests and high-tech arenas that really come alive during the one-on-one fights.

Graphically, Dark Resurrection is one of the best-looking PSP games yet. Each fighter has a distinct look and features detailed, fluid movements as they flail around, throwing and blocking punches and kicks.

Of the several fighting modes available, the player-versus-player online mode offers the most replay value. Two PSP players within wireless range can duke it out, which is far more interesting than the built-in computer foes (who still provide plenty of challenge, however).

Though much of the game showcases the audiovisual prowess of the PSP, Dark Resurrection also points out one of the system’s biggest annoyances: the button placement.

In a frantic game like this, it’s painfully clear that the directional buttons are spaced too far apart from each other, if only by a millimetre or two.

But that’s certainly not the game’s fault, and at least I was able to tweak the button layout to make things a bit easier.

My fingers may be tired and aching, but Dark Resurrection serves notice that good fighting games are possible - and enjoyable - on PSP.

Three stars out of four.

Lawyer Fighting To Ban ’Columbine Simulator’

A Florida lawyer said Monday that he is on a mission to stop the release of Bully, a video game scheduled to come out in October.

Developer Rockstar claims the game will teach young people how to navigate through the tricky and sometimes brutal social pitfalls of high school. Bully puts the player in the position of a new kid who has to confront bullies, deal with teachers, get the girl and avoid detention at a corrupt boarding school. Though it has not been released yet, a sneak peek reveals that the main character, Jimmy Hopkins kicks and wields a baseball bat during his journey.

Attorney Jack Thompson, who has appeared on 60 Minutes, CNN and ABC World News Tonight, has crusaded against violent lyrics and video games for years. He called the yet-to-be-released game a "Columbine simulator."

Thompson represented the parents of three children killed in Paducah, Ky. in 1997, when one of their classmates went on a shooting rampage. He and investigators said that 14-year-old Michael Carneal had spent hours playing video games that simulate violence.

Thompson tried unsuccessfully to obtain damages from game creators, claiming they were negligent in distributing games that spawned violent behaviors in children. The case was dismissed, but Thompson said his interactions with the family launched a lifelong commitment.

"These people changed my life, broke my heart," he said. "I believe people are going to be harmed because of these games. This is not just some effort by some 55-year-old guy dictating entertainment taste for other people's children. I've got a dog in this hunt and I know where their skeletons are. I think this is the most ridiculous game anyone has come up with."

Thompson, who has also targeted rappers like N.W.A., is seeking a congressional subpoena for an early copy. He said he is prepared to file suit Friday in Miami if he does not gain help from U.S. Rep. Cliff Stearns (news, bio, voting record), a Florida Republican.

His ultimate goal is to prevent the release of the video. He said that once the video is out, "the horse will be out of the barn and it will be too late to do anything about it." He said he plans to argue that it violates Florida's public nuisance laws, which prohibit activities that can injure the health of the community.

Representatives from Rockstar did not return calls for comment. Supporters of Bully claim that it is not graphic and that it is protected speech, even an art form.

Thompson said he does not trust a game that has not yet been rated and is published by Take2 Interactive. The publisher and agreed to a settlement after investigators uncovered hidden pornographic sex scenes in the Hot Coffee module of Rockstar's Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, which also includes scenes in which players can brutalize prostitutes.

Sony PlayStation 3 Predicted To Win Console War

Industry analysts believe that Sony's long-delayed PlayStation 3 will still lead sales in North America, despite rivals Microsoft and Nintendo stealing a march on the market.

Yankee Group predicts that, despite intense competition from Microsoft and Nintendo, the PlayStation 3 will take the crown by narrow margin.

The analysts believe that Microsoft offers the most competition at present, having got off to a flying start by launching its Xbox 360 nearly 12 months before the PlayStation 3.

Yankee Group estimates that the PlayStation 3 will have sold about 30 million units by 2011, and will account for 44 per cent of cumulative third-generation console sales in North America.

Microsoft will have sold nearly 27 million units, accounting for 40 per

cent of the market, and Nintendo will come in at a distant third, having sold just over 11 million units, accounting for 16 per cent of the market.

"By the time third-generation consoles reach market maturity in 2011, the PlayStation 3 will once again be the market leader," said Michael Goodman, Yankee Group media & entertainment strategies senior analyst.

"With a growing installed base of connected consoles, content owners are beginning to recognise the potential video game consoles offer as a distribution channel.

"Additionally, these platforms will serve as a strong medium for advertising, validating the growing market for in-game and around-game advertising."

Yankee Group also believes that fewer consoles will be sold this generation, primarily due to higher per-unit prices.

Video Games: A Force for Good?

Video games are not just about reaching high scores or blowing off steam after a long day at work or school. The $10 billion interactive entertainment industry is also finding that games can be a tool for good - from healing your mind and body to solving world problems.

The latest positive pursuits in games range from burning calories and fighting cancer to tackling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"We've known for a while that games can sharpen memory and improve hand-eye coordination, but they can also be used to teach problem-solving skills, increase our awareness of world issues, help with social phobias and can even treat those with serious illnesses," says Ben Sawyer, co-founder and director of the Games for Health Project, an organization that brings together medical professionals, researchers and gamemakers to explore new ways to improve health care practice and policy. "What we're realizing now is that gaming, as a medium, has become more than just entertainment."

Among the two dozen or more games scheduled to be on display at the Games for Health Conference, scheduled for Sept. 28-29 in Baltimore, are Re-Mission, a game that gives cancer patients a chance to blast malignant cells; Food Force, about the United Nations' struggles in delivering food to needy parts of the world; and Peacemaker, a game about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"Gaming has the capacity to teach us that problems are multifaceted," Sawyer says. "This is a clear case of learning by doing. The U.N. game, for example, can show you what an organization is all about - and let's face it, it's far more effective than a pamphlet."

Video games clearly have a powerful effect on gamers, says David Walsh, president of the National Institute for Media and the Family.

"The really good ones tend to be very, very addictive. But these games can be good teachers. We just have to pay attention to what they are teaching," he says. "As the industry becomes more mature, hopefully the creative possibilities will be applied to more positive themes."

On popular video systems, games that exercise the mind and body have become big hits. Konami has sold more than four million Dance Dance Revolution games in North America since 2001. (Players connect a dance mat to a video game console, choose a song and step on the correct arrows according to the on-screen instructions.)

Nintendo has sold more than 4 million copies worldwide of Brain Age: Train Your Brain in Minutes a Day since its 2005 launch and more than 250,000 copies of Big Brain Academy in the two months it has been available in the USA.

These two games ($20 each) for the portable Nintendo DS system offer brain-sharpening activities that range from reading and counting exercises to word games and drawing challenges to Sudoku puzzles.

Their appeal? "Video games serve as relaxing getaways as you become temporarily entranced by them, melting away the days' stressors," says Dr. Carl Arinoldo, a Long Island, N.Y.-based psychologist.

Casual Gaming Taking Places of Daily Activities

A substantial minority of American adults would rather spend their free time playing casual games - such online diversions as "Bejeweled" and "TextTwist" - than watch television.

A study by Harris Interactive set for release Monday found that 31 percent of the over-18 set preferred the games to TV for whiling away a spare hour. Watching movies at home fared better, with 21 percent choosing games instead, but going to the movie theater did slightly worse with 35 percent.

RealNetworks commissioned the study to understand its customers better, company senior vice president worldwide games Michael Schutzler said. He added that they were very surprised by some of the findings, particularly when the report broke out the numbers for women older than 40.

Nearly half (49 percent) would play casual games rather than go to the movie theater, 32 percent opted for them over movies at home, and 37 percent chose them over watching TV.

Schutzler said RealNets began offering games six years ago. "It really wasn't going well," he added. "Then just for the heck of it we tried 'Bejeweled.' It immediately sold hundreds of times anything else we ever offered."

Working with women's lifestyle expert Jennifer Louden, RealNets used the Harris findings and other research to improve sales of advertising and downloaded games.

"Effective advertising in casual games requires an added level of sensitivity," Schutzler said. "It's clearly an effective way to reach this important audience, women over 40, but it can't disrupt the experience."

The same group doesn't like games that incorporate brands into the action, often called advergames, but the set reacts positively to sponsorship and to interstitials between levels, he said.

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A-ONE’s Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Fire Hazard Prompts Gigantic Dell Laptop Battery Recall

Computer maker Dell Monday said it will recall 4.1 million laptop computer batteries because of a potential fire hazard. It’s reportedly one of the largest consumer electronics recalls in history.

The lithium-ion batteries being recalled are installed in 2.7 million laptops sold in the United States and 1.4 million sold overseas between April 2004 and July 18 of this year, Dell said.

"Under rare conditions, it is possible for these batteries to overheat, which could cause a risk of fire," Dell said in a statement. The comapany said the overheating was caused by a manufacturing defect in batteries made for it by Sony.

Customers may continue to use the laptop computers safely by turning the system off, ejecting the battery, and using the AC adapter and power cord to power the system until the replacement battery is received, the company said.

Models Affected

The recalled batteries were sold with the following Dell notebook computers: Dell Latitude D410, D500, D505, D510, D520, D600, D610, D620, D800, D810; Inspiron 6000, 8500, 8600, 9100, 9200, 9300, 500m, 510m, 600m, 6400, E1505, 700m, 710m, 9400, E1705; and Dell Precision M20, M60, M70 and M90 mobile workstations; and XPS, XPS Gen2, XPS M170 and XPS M1710.

The batteries were also sold separately, including in response to service calls. The words "Dell" and one of the following are printed on the batteries: "Made in Japan" or "Made in China" or "Battery Cell Made in Japan Assembled in China," Dell said.

Dell urged customers to visit the firm’s Web site beginning at 1 a.m. U.S. Central Daylight Time Tuesday or call toll-free at 1-866-342-0011, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. CDT. Dell is headquartered in Round Rock, Texas, near Austin.

In past instances of battery recall, Dell and the CPSC urged consumers to stop using the laptops’ batteries until they received a replacement. Lithium-ion batteries also are used in cell phones, camcorders, digital cameras and other consumer electronics products.

Dell said it is cooperating with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in conducting the recall. The federal agency described it as the largest recall in the history of the consumer electronics industry, according to published reports.

According to the CPSC, lithium-ion batteries have been cited in recalls of other laptop models, including computers from Hewlett-Packard and from Apple Computer.

Other Recent Laptop Battery Recalls

Dell made other voluntary recalls of 22,000 laptop batteries in December 2005, 284,000 in 2001 and 27,000 in 2000, according to the CPSC.

Dell reported six instances in which laptops overheated and caused fires since December of last year, although no one was injured in any of the incidents, the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal reported today.

French Firms Target eBay in Anti-Counterfeit Drive

A French industry group plans to file a complaint with prosecutors seeking damages from eBay Inc. and other Internet auction sites for the sale of counterfeit products on their Web pages, the group’s chairman said.

Marc Antoine Jamet, chairman of France’s Union of Manufacturers (Unifab), told Reuters that the complaint, due to be filed next month, also aims at forcing the sites to clamp down on product pirates.

"There is a continent which makes the fakes, which is China, and there is a continent where they are sold, and that is the Internet," he said.

Other auction sites in the firing line include those run by privately held iOffer.com, Yahoo Inc. and Japan’s Rakuten Inc..

But the main focus is eBay, with which Unifab has held more than a dozen meetings in the last two years, Jamet said.

"We think eBay is perfectly capable of policing its site, but they offer to take action only after the fact. They refuse to act pre-emptively," he said.

"We think they have the IT to manage their sites, to track bank accounts and ownership."

EBay spokesman Hani Duzry said the company operates an anti-counterfeit goods program and constantly monitors auctions for blatantly infringing products and removes them.

"We don’t allow counterfeit items on the site. It is against eBay policy. It is illegal. We are committed to working with copyright owners on this," Duzry said.

Ebay "makes it easy," he said, for any copyright owner to contact eBay to report infringing products in order to have eBay remove them.

Jamet said, however, that the firm had refused Unifab’s request to pro-actively shut down merchants of counterfeit goods in the same way it agreed in 2001 to ban listings of Nazi memorabilia and from groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

Unifab’s complaint will contain concrete examples of counterfeit goods found for sale on the Internet, he said.

Leather goods maker Louis Vuitton, a unit of LVMH, the world’s largest luxury goods group, last year found 235,000 examples of counterfeit articles on 340 eBay pages.

In one case, it tracked more than 100 copies of the same article being sold within one hour, said Jamet, who is also a senior executive at LVMH.

Other luxury goods companies are also targets of counterfeiters, while Unifab members in sectors from pharmaceuticals to spare car parts support the action, he said.

Unifab had decided to move now, he added, because the problem of counterfeit sales had exploded.

Three years ago, none of the French firms affected - including big-name luxury goods makers such as LVMH, Hermes International and Chanel - monitored Internet traffic.

Now, many have teams who have spent months gathering evidence and assembling a case.

"It’s a huge phenomenon, which has multiplied by 25 times in the last five years," he said.

Jamet said Unifab would be asking prosecutors to seek damages and interest from the auction sites in relation to the alleged losses suffered by the firms. In the case of some luxury goods companies, these ran into millions of euros, he said.

Unifab also wants to prosecute the sites for providing the means to resell counterfeit goods, a charge the French luxury goods industry has successfully brought against shop owners in Beijing’s silk market and on New York’s Canal Street.

In addition, it is asking the French government to revise its laws on electronic commerce to make online auctioneers "co-responsible" for the goods that are sold on their sites, Jamet said.

Unifab believes its case has been strengthened by a Paris court’s decision in June to fine online search engine Google 300,000 euros ($385,000) over advertisements for counterfeit goods generated by its sites. Google had based its defense partly on the existing French e-commerce law.

France is home to much of the world’s luxury goods industry and the French government has taken steps in the past three years to toughen its laws against counterfeiting.

The government tried last month to broker a friendly solution to the row between Unifab and the auctioneers, but it was rejected by the industry group which believed it did not go far enough.

Unifab estimates counterfeiting represents 5 to 9 percent of global trade, or 200 billion to 300 billion euros a year in lost earnings for manufacturers. Losses in France alone exceed 6 billion euros, it says.

Judge Orders Online Sale of Unabomber Goods

"Unabomber" Theodore Kaczynski’s journal, as well as axes, typewriters and books seized from his Montana cabin will be sold in an Internet auction to help pay restitution to his victims, a federal judge has ordered.

Judge Garland Burrell of the U.S. District Court in Sacramento issued the order on Thursday, directing the U.S. Marshals Service to arrange to sell the mail bomber’s property through an online auction.

Proceeds from the sale would go toward a $15 million restitution order to pay victims and their families. The auctioneer would get no more than 10 percent of the proceeds to cover its costs.

The date and company that will handle the auction will be determined later.

Among the items on auction will be thousands of pages of writings by Kaczynski, a former math professor who withdrew from society and developed radical anti-technology beliefs. The San Francisco Chronicle said Kaczynski’s journal was some 22,000 pages long and detailed his anti-social feelings.

Other personal items, which were seized in a 1996 raid of Kaczynski’s cabin, on the block will be hand tools, shovels, saw blades, knives, bows and arrows, axes, clothing, typewriters and a briefcase containing his degrees from the University of Michigan.

Burrell also ordered some 200 books - with titles ranging from "Stalking the Wild Asparagus" to "Axiomatization of the Theory of Relativity" - to be sold.

The judge ruled that bomb-making materials found in Kaczynski’s cabin not be part of the auction. Burrell also said weapons and bomb-making material would not be returned to Kaczynski as he had requested.

Kaczynski, 64, killed three people and injured more than 20 with homemade bombs sent through the mail from 1978 to 1995. He also threatened to blow up airplanes.

Federal agents seized Kaczynski’s property in a raid of his cabin in 1996. His arrest followed a tip by his brother, who recognized Kaczynski’s beliefs in his manifesto attacking modern life published by The New York Times and The Washington Post in 1995.

Kaczynski struck a plea bargain in 1998 that sent him to prison for life at the super-maximum-security federal prison in Florence, Colorado, known as the "Alcatraz of the Rockies."

Zero-Day Attackers Target Japanese Word Processor

Microsoft Office isn’t the only word-processing software at risk of zero-day hacker attacks.

According to a warning from anti-virus vendor Symantec, attackers are exploiting a previously undocumented vulnerability in Ichitaro, a word processor produced by Justsystems, a Japanese software company.

Ichitaro, which is widely used by central and local governments as well as

educational institutions in Japan, is the main product sold by Justsystems.

Symantec virus researcher John Canavan said in an advisory that attackers were using maliciously rigged documents to exploit a unicode stack overflow in the software to execute code on the underlying operating system.

He said the attack included the use of a Trojan horse named Infostealer.Papi, which is used to spy on the target system and relay information back to the attackers.

The Ichitaro attacks closely resemble the recent wave of zero-day attacks against Microsoft Office programs and suggest that corporate espionage may be the main motive.

Over the last three months, malicious Office documents have been used in targeted attacks against Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint users. In all three cases, the attackers used reconnaissance Trojans capable of hijacking sensitive data from the target.

In the Ichitaro case, Canavan said that the Infostealer.Papi Trojan is put on the machine by Tarodrop, which comes in via the software flaw.

The Trojan copies itself to the system directory, creates a service named CAPAPI and drops an ancillary DLL file that contains its main functionality, Canavan explained.

"A copy of its DLL is then injected into each running process to gather system information and relay it back to the Trojan’s authors at ’pop.lovenickel.com.’ Similar to Trojans dropped by variants of the Trojan.Mdropper family, this domain is registered in China," he added.

According to the Symantec advisory, the threat remains "a very limited, targeted attack."

"However, if the speculations about the timed releases of these exploits are indeed correct, we need to be on alert and remain vigilant for when more appear," Canavan warned.

Microsoft Goes Live with New Blog Software

For the blogging aficionado who spends hours tweaking his or her blog using a browser-based text editor, publishing may have just gotten easier with Microsoft’s new publishing tool.

Named Live Writer, the new WYSIWYG editor is still in beta, but so far it’s been well received by initial users. Live Writer is designed to look much like Microsoft Word, so a simple highlight and a click on the desired text is all that is required to make changes. -If you’re a power blogger I think Write will be a helpful application, being able to save drafts and organize work," said Charlene Li, devices analyst for Forrester Research. Free For Now Though Microsoft traditionally garners muted skepticism if not outright hostility from critics over new products, the new application is surprisingly effective, says Joe Wilcox, analyst for Jupiter Research. "The new tool is pretty good. It supports a bunch of different blog services," said Wilcox. In a fast changing world where many consumers depend more and more on Web-based applications, this could be seen as a bid to bring users back to traditional desktop programs, Wilcox explained.

A handful of blog editing applications currently exist on the marketplace such as Six Apart, which costs between $15 and $20. Other blog software tends to be Web-based and is available free of charge for registered users of the various blog services. Microsoft Live is currently available free of charge.

YouTube Suffers First Unplanned Site Outage

Web video sensation YouTube.com, which serves up more than 100 million videos online a day, suffered a six-hour breakdown on Tuesday - its first-ever unplanned outage, a company spokeswoman confirmed.

"We are experiencing a temporary site outage due to a database-related issue," YouTube spokeswoman Julie Supan said in an e-mail to Reuters five hours after the outage began.

"To clarify and ensure accuracy, the site is not down for maintenance," Supan said in a statement released shortly before the site recovered. "This was an unplanned outage."

Access to the YouTube site was cut off around 7:30 a.m. PDT (1430 GMT) and was only restored around 1:30 p.m. PDT (2030 GMT), or six hours later, according the spokeswoman.

The breakdown came as Internet audience measurement firm comScore Networks on Tuesday released data showing how YouTube surged into the No. 40 ranking in July among U.S. Web sites, with 16 million visitors, up 20 percent just since June.

Rival measurement firm Nielsen//NetRatings estimated that YouTube had 20 million visitors in June, reflecting differences in how the firms count Web traffic rather than any slowdown in visitors.

The YouTube (http://www.youtube.com) site specializes in short - typically 2-minute - homemade, comic videos created by users. YouTube serves as a quick entertainment break or viewers with broadband computer connections at work or home.

In June, 2.5 billion videos were watched on YouTube, the company said last month. More than 65,000 videos uploaded daily at that time to YouTube, up from around 50,000 in May.

Late-night followers of the Internet video phenomenon YouTube are familiar with the San Mateo, California-based company’s quirky habit of taking its site offline for several hours every few weeks for scheduled database maintenance or software upgrades.

Normally, these planned outages are signaled in advance to users and accompanied by a joke graphic that makes light of the downtime.

AOL Prepares To Dig for Gold - Literally

AOL is preparing to dig for buried gold and platinum on property in

Massachusetts owned by the parents of a man it sued for sending millions of unwanted spam e-mails to its customers.

AOL won a $12.8 million judgment last year in U.S. District Court in Virginia against Davis Wolfgang Hawke but has been unable to contact Hawke to collect any of the money he was ordered to pay in the lawsuit. The company said Tuesday it intends to search for gold and platinum bars the company believes are hidden near his parent's home in Medfield, Mass.

"This exercise isn't something out of ... 'Treasure Island.' This is a court-directed, judge-approved legal process that is simply aimed at responsibly recovering hidden assets," AOL spokesman Nicholas Graham said.

Hawke's parents did not return several telephone messages left at their home by The Associated Press.

To win a judge's permission for the search, AOL submitted receipts reflecting large purchases by Hawke of gold and platinum bars, Graham said. The company indicated it believes Hawke buried the loot on his parent's property using a shovel.

AOL said it will try to accommodate Hawke's parents by not being too obtrusive.

A former U.S. prosecutor described AOL's efforts as highly unusual. Marc Zwillinger said his law firm has seized plasma televisions, jet skis and other gadgets in unrelated spam and piracy lawsuits.

"But I've never had a case digging up gold bars and bullion," Zwillinger said. "That's definitely unique."

Google Maps To Offer Coupons For Businesses

Google Inc. will offer printable discount coupons to local shoppers, in a promotional bid that aims to drive U.S. online shoppers using its Google Maps service to visit stores, the company said on Monday.

The world's top Web search supplier is taking advantage of the marketing tool, which is traditionally used by small businesses, to entice U.S. consumers to seek out savings from local retailers such as dry cleaners, pizza delivery restaurants and auto repair shops.

Google has partnered with Valpak, the top U.S. supplier of coupon advertising, to provide more than 20,000 coupons from current Valpak advertisers when consumers search for relevant stores using its Google Maps map and local directory service.

Valpak is a unit of privately held Cox Enterprises.

Google also plans to encourage businesses to create their own discount coupons using a simple Web-based template, giving small businesses-even ones that don't have their own Web sites-an easy way to attract hard-to-reach online shoppers.

"One of the challenges small businesses face today is the lack of an ability to contend with online users," said Shailesh Rao, Google's director of local search. "We know it's a practical fact ... Small businesses rely

on coupons," he said.

When Google users search for local information, discount coupons from U.S. businesses now are displayed on Google Maps (http://www.maps.google.com) search results and business listing pages. The company may expand the program to other markets in Europe and Asia in coming months, Rao said.

The coupons can be printed out directly from a computer and redeemed at a physical store location of a neighborhood or local business. There is no charge to businesses or consumers.

"This answers the general problem that exists in the online world of demonstrating the value of how much real-world traffic online marketing actually drives into stores," said Greg Sterling, an analyst with Sterling Market Intelligence in Oakland, California who specializes in local Web search.

In seeking to bridge the online and offline shopping worlds, Google's discount-coupon push marks another competitive challenge for newspaper publishers, which have typically relied upon inserted advertising coupons as a source of revenue.

It also poses a challenge for established direct marketers which distribute coupons. Direct online rivals to Valpak include CoolSavings.com, a unit of privately held newspaper publishing and broadcast company Landmark Communications Inc.

"America is the country in which price is king," said Kurt Barnard, president of consulting firm Retail Forecasting Group. "Every marketing ploy that drives a customer into a store is critical."

Later this year, advertisers using Google AdWords-the company's advertising network that operates across affiliated Web sites-will be able to add coupons directly to their advertisements as a new tool to woo buyers, Google said.

Google discount coupons must be printed out and presented to retailers. There are no current plans to offer the discount program to mobile phone users, who, in theory, can simply download the coupons on Web-equipped mobile phones and present the electronic screen to a store clerk. Valpak said few retailers have a secure way to manage electronic coupons.

Businesses can upload a small image to appear on the face of the coupon and create a unique identifying number in order to track coupon offers and defend against potential fraud.

Valpak targets 500 million blue envelopes through the mails to 45 million households in the United States and Canada each year. It offers coupons from 75,000 businesses a year.

The 25 Greatest PCs of All Time

IBM's first PC, announced on August 12, 1981, was far from the first personal computer - but when it arrived, there was near-universal agreement that it was likely to be a landmark machine. It was. And 25 years later, it still ranks among the most significant computers ever.

Like the IBM Personal Computer, Model 5150, the greatest systems have always had ambitions to boldly go where no computer has gone before. Without these innovative machines, the PC revolution would have been a lot less...well, revolutionary. So we decided to celebrate the IBM PC's 25th birthday by identifying the 25 PCs that have mattered most - from any manufacturer, and from any era.

No single characteristic makes a computer great. But we managed to boil down an array of winning qualities into four factors, all of which happen to begin with the letter I.

Innovation: Did the PC do anything that was genuinely new? Did it incorporate the latest technology? Impact: Was it widely imitated? Did it become part of the cultural zeitgeist? Industrial design: Was it a looker? Did it have clever features that made using it a pleasure? Intangibles: Was there anything else about it that set it apart from the same ol' same ol'?

Armed with this scale, we considered dozens of PCs - which meant that we also had to consider the question "What is a PC, exactly?" Ultimately we decided that a PC is anything that's recognizably a desktop or portable computer in design - or, alternatively, anything that runs an operating system originally created for desktops and laptops. After a lot of nostalgic debate, we selected our winners. Which systems we picked - and didn't pick - for our Top 25 may be controversial. If one of your favorites didn't make our roster, check out our list of 25 near-great PCs.

Just to drum up a little suspense, we'll reveal the Top 25 starting with number 25, and then work our way backward to the single greatest PC of all time. (Spoilsports can skip ahead to number 1; we won't be any the wiser. You can also jump to the complete list of our Top 25 picks, or browse the list by decade.)

Ready?

Greatest PCs: 25-23 25. Non-Linear Systems Kaypro II (1982)

Non-Linear Systems' Kaypro II didn't break new ground when it appeared toward the end of 1982, but it was a classic case of the right product at the right time. Even more than the Osborne (which had pioneered the concept of the luggable microcomputer), it appealed to a growing group of nongeeks who were awakening to the productivity benefits of personal computers but couldn't afford (or didn't want to spend) several thousand dollars for an Apple or IBM PC along with the necessary software and peripherals (such as a printer).

Named for NLS founder (and digital voltmeter inventor) Andrew Kay, the Kaypro II - and its series of successors over the ensuing years, including the 4 and the 2x - was a moderately priced alternative. When first released, the Kaypro II cost $1795 and, like the Osborne, came with all the productivity software (word processor, spreadsheet) most people would need. Encased in grey and blue metal, the Kaypro was rugged and utilitarian in design: You could latch the keyboard over the 9-inch monochrome display (far roomier than the Osborne's stingy 5-incher) and carry it like a suitcase. But at 26 pounds, it was a heavy piece of luggage. The Kaypro line also represented the last gasp of the CP/M operating system: By the mid-1980s, MS-DOS was already becoming the lingua franca of non-Apple personal computing.

The Kaypro's affordability and out-of-the-box usability was very popular with journalists, including myself: In 1984 I took out a $1600 loan to buy

a Kaypro 2x - my first computer - and by then the purchase price also got me a daisy-wheel printer. A year or so later, I became a TV critic for a newspaper, which bought me a Hayes Smartmodem that let me electronically transmit my reviews from home (the modem also enabled my introduction to online computing). I used that Kaypro and Hayes modem until 1992, when I took out another loan to buy my first IBM clone. I've never again used the same PC for eight years.

24. Toshiba Qosmio G35-AV650 (2006)

Increasingly, PCs have evolved into sophisticated entertainment devices. And the first truly entertainment-centric notebook to catch our attention was Toshiba's Qosmio, which continues to innovate as a portable entertainment PC two years after its introduction. (Oh, that name? Toshiba says it derived Qosmio, pronounced "kozmio," from cosmos, as in universe, and the Italian word mio, meaning "my.") The latest iteration not only improves on the thoughtful design of its predecessors but is also the first notebook to integrate a blue-laser-based optical drive - in this case, HD DVD - for playback of high-definition entertainment content.

The current, third-generation Qosmio G35-AV650 packs a slew of features that will make it as at home in your living room as in your home office. A stylish 10.1-pound notebook, this $2999 model's HDMI port supports HDCP and 1080i output, so you can connect it to an HDTV. It also runs Windows XP Media Center and comes with a TV tuner and remote control, so it can serve as a DVR. The 17-inch wide-screen LCD gets its power from two lamps instead of one, which we found generated greater brightness than competing models. The system features an integrated 1-bit digital amplifier, Harman/Kardon speakers, and Dolby Home Theater enhancements, as well.

When I first reviewed the Qosmio, I liked its winning combination of looks and design. I have big hands, and I found the notebook easy to navigate. I also appreciated its bright, high-resolution display. The roomy LCD provides plenty of on-screen real estate for when I'm working on spreadsheets, and its audio-visual prowess provides welcome relief after hours.

23. Apple eMate 300 (1997)

Over the past three decades, Apple Computer has released a bunch of great PCs that had a huge impact on the marketplace. Here's one that had almost no impact during its short life - aside from its cameo in the film Batman & Robin as Batgirl's (Alicia Silverstone's) PC - but we love it anyway.

The $799 eMate was idiosyncratic in virtually every way a computer can be idiosyncratic, starting with its target audience: schoolkids. It ran an operating system designed for PDAs (Apple's Newton OS). It didn't have a hard drive, but it did have pen input. It looked vaguely like a notebook, but its industrial design - with a green, curvy case that looked like it had sprung from the mind of science-fiction illustrator H.R. Giger - was utterly unique.

The eMate attracted a cult audience among business users. But Steve Jobs, who returned to Apple soon after its launch, wasn't a believer: Less than a year after the eMate shipped, he killed it, along with the rest of the Newton line. The cult continues, though - you can even find hacks to overclock the eMate at Stephanie's Newton Web Site.

Almost a decade later, the eMate feels like an early pass at the kind of innovative, affordable educational PC that the world is still trying to

create. Too bad it turned out to be a dead end.

Greatest PCs: 22-20 22. Hewlett-Packard 100LX (1993)

HP’s 100LX wasn’t the first would-be pocket PC, but it was the first one that nailed both the "pocket" and the "PC" aspects of the equation. (The Poqet PC wasn’t really pocketable, and HP’s own 95LX had a low-res screen that hobbled compatibility with desktop apps.)

The $749 100LX managed to squeeze a lot of functionality into its tiny clamshell design. It had a QWERTY keyboard (with a separate numeric keypad!), an 80-by-25-character monochrome display, and Lotus 1-2-3 in ROM. Best of all, it ran DOS 5.0, which meant that it was compatible with thousands of popular programs.

HP’s 200LX, a slightly improved version of the 100LX, was also popular. With the 300LX, however, the company dumped DOS in favor of the then-new Windows CE operating system. Compatibility with desktop software was lost - which might be one reason why the 300LX is forgotten but people are still using its predecessors to this day.

21. Alienware Area-51 (1998)

For as long as there have been PCs, there have been PC gamers. In 1996, Sakai of Miami - named after a Japanese warrior - began rethinking how to market its home computers. "The premise was that we could sell gaming PCs, that we could target people like us who were gamers," recalls company cofounder Nelson Gonzalez. In 1997 the company renamed itself Alienware ("I was really into The X-Files and aliens back then, and I was into computer hardware," he says) and launched its first gaming machine, The Blade, with a 3D video graphics card.

In 1998 that model evolved into the Area-51 (an Intel machine; its AMD counterpart, the Aurora, came out a year later). It was amped up with gaming hardware, including three video cards (one 2D card, plus two 3D add-on cards with 3Dfx’s Voodoo chip) and two sound cards (a Sound Blaster 16 for older games and a newer Diamond Monster Sound card, which took advantage of DirectX-capable features like 3D positioning). Back then a high-end system set you back $3799. In 2000, the company added an array of space-age colors to its still-ordinary Area-51 and Aurora case design; it wasn’t until 2003 that the vendor introduced its current hallmark design, the sci-fi "Predator" chassis.

Alienware’s innovative and startling design influenced PC cases in general, and gave gaming PCs new street cred (even Dell and HP have produced gaming systems in the years since). The company, which Dell bought last year, continues to refine its distinctive design and to produce top-flight gaming rigs: In May we named the Alienware Aurora 7500 one of the Top 100 Products of 2006, and in July the company introduced an improved alien-motif case design.

20. Gateway 2000 Destination (1996)

Back in 1996, when convergence was still more buzzword than reality, Gateway 2000 (the company later dropped the 2000 from its name) launched a system that was the precursor to today’s media-centric PC. At its debut, the Destination was priced from $3499 to $4699. But for that hefty cost of admission, you got a system that was ahead of its time: The Destination married a 31-inch CRT monitor with a multimedia PC, a combination designed to replace the gear already filling your entertainment center.

The PC itself was black and boxy, practically the size of two 1990s-vintage VCRs stacked on top of each other. It included a wireless keyboard and remote control, a TV tuner, and surround-sound speakers. As with today's DVRs, you could browse TV listings - but you couldn't record TV to the hard disk.

Along with other proto-Media Center PCs such as Compaq and RCA's PC Theatre, the Destination attracted lots of attention but failed to make its way into many living rooms. However, it did find a niche among businesses and schools as a presentation machine. And the basic idea it pioneered returned in 2002, when PCs based on Microsoft's Windows XP Media Center operating system appeared.

Greatest PCs: 19-17 19. Apple iMac, Second Generation (2002)

The first-generation iMac of 1997 may have been the machine that told the world that Apple, and its recently returned cofounder Steve Jobs, were back. But its second-generation successor was a vastly different, far more inventive computer. And even though it didn't turn out to be an influential one, it remains a high point in PC design history.

With its dome-shaped base and its flat-panel screen that "floated" on a swivel arm, this iMac was, quite literally, like no computer that came before it. It had a friendly, anthropomorphic feel, in part because it bore a spiritual resemblance to Luxo Jr., the plucky desk-lamp hero of the Oscar-winning short film from Pixar, Steve Jobs's other company.

The design looked cool, saved space, and provided near-infinite adjustability for the display. But it didn't last long: In 2004 the second-gen iMac was replaced by yet another all-new model, which squeezed the entire computer into the back of the flat-panel monitor. That elegant design is probably more practical than its lamp-like predecessor, but it lacks the older machine's whimsical exuberance.

18. Hewlett-Packard OmniBook 300 (1993)

The innovative OmniBook 300 wasn't just one of the first subnotebooks - it was one of the most innovative hardware designs ever, albeit one that didn't prove particularly influential. Weighing 2.9 pounds, the system stored Windows 3.1, Excel 4.0, Word 2.0, and MS-DOS 5.0 in ROM memory rather than on a hard drive; this allowed it to boot up instantly. User storage was solid-state too, on a 40MB PCMCIA Type III hard disk or a 10MB PCMCIA Type II flash-disk drive.

Productivity was a central theme for the OmniBook, which started at $1950. The unit came with LapLink Remote Access and HP's organizational tools (contacts, appointments, and a financial calculator, same as in the HP 100LX), and provided one-button access to all applications. It also had a unique integrated mouse that popped out of the laptop's right side on a thin piece of plastic; the design eliminated the need for an annoying mouse cable, but the mouse was small and awkward to move about.

Given the OmniBook's basic 386SXLV CPU, monochrome 9-inch VGA screen, and power-friendly ROM storage, it's not surprising HP gave the notebook a high battery-life rating - up to 9 hours of power for the 10MB flash-disk version. (In a pinch, the unit could run on AA batteries - unheard of for a computer with a full-size keyboard.) Although the solid-state approach to laptop storage didn't catch on at the time, it's back today in products like Samsung's new 16GB and 32GB flash-memory drives. Funny how things

come full circle.

17. Toshiba T1000 (1987)

Toshiba’s wildly popular T1000 brought DOS in a truly lap-friendly portable size. The T1000 measured 12 by 2 by 11 inches and weighed 6.4 pounds - a veritable featherweight compared with suitcase-size luggables, and more than 3.5 pounds lighter than its nearest competitor, the Datavue Spark. It was also cheaper than most laptops of its time.

The T1000’s durable clamshell design accommodated a full-size 82-key keyboard, a 720KB 3.5-inch floppy drive, 512KB of RAM, and an internal modem. The unit embedded MS-DOS 2.11 in ROM - which eliminated the need to have two floppy drives, as some competing notebooks of that era had, but also made it impossible to use certain software (such as WordPerfect Executive, which required two disks to run).

To achieve its size and cost, the T1000 made some sacrifices in CPU and battery performance. Nonetheless, this model helped catapult Toshiba to the fore of mobile computing, and it paved the way for the next wave of laptops, including number 18 on our list, HP’s OmniBook 300 (above). (You can read the T1000 quick-reference guide at this fan site.)

Greatest PCs: 16-14 16. Tandy TRS-80 Model I (1977)

Tandy’s TRS-80 Model I lacked the pizzazz of the Apple II, but it was the first computer to be truly marketed to the masses: Over 200,000 of the monochromatic little machines were sold by Radio Shack, an electronics retailer with thousands of locations in an age when almost nobody had ever heard of a computer store.

For $600, the first iteration of the TRS-80 gave you a measly 4KB of RAM and a rudimentary version of the BASIC language, and it stored programs on sluggish, flaky audiocassette tapes. As with other early PCs, the best way to get it to do something was to write a program from scratch. "There was an almost indescribable joy to be had the first time a program that you wrote yourself actually worked," remembers early owner Craig Landrum.

Over time the Model I gained more memory, disk drives, networking, and other enhancements; acquired a library of thousands of programs; and saw the debut of progeny such as the TRS-80 Model 100 portable (number 8 on our list). TRS-80 computers were the first to be the subject of magazines devoted entirely to one company’s PCs; today, they’re impressively documented at Ira Goldklang’s TRS-80.com.

15. Shuttle SV24 Barebone System (2001)

For years, the PC was all about the big beige box. But in 2001, Shuttle came up with a toaster-size design for do-it-yourselfers that would push the limits of how much you could pack into a tight space. And it was tight: The case measured just 10.6 by 7.5 by 6.7 inches, and its components were so crammed in that airflow seemed to be an afterthought. To get an idea of just how small it was compared with a standard midsize tower, turn to Anandtech’s review of this system.

The $250 SV24 Barebone System offered the basics, namely a compact Flex ATX motherboard with integrated audio and graphics and a 150-watt power supply, housed in Shuttle’s small, aluminum case. You supplied the processor, memory, and storage. Appropriate for home or office use, this tiny system sparked a slew of imitators, all trying to match and improve

upon its combination of size, functionality, and style.

Today, Shuttle not only sells bare-bones systems but also offers fully hatched PCs, like the XPC G5 2100 we recently tested for the value half of our Top 10 Desktop PCs chart. The company’s compact models have upped the ante considerably with regard to performance and construction.

14. Atari 800 (1979)

Two years after Atari unleashed its first video game console, later dubbed the Atari 2600, the company shipped its first home computers. In many ways the Atari 800 - the more advanced of the two models Atari introduced in late 1979 - redefined the expectations of what a home computer could do, especially in graphics and sound.

Part game machine, part productivity enhancer, the $999 Atari 800 was the first home computer to feature a custom video coprocessor in addition to its CPU, which was the same 8-bit 6502 used in the Apple II. This design enabled the Atari 800 to generate 128 colors (256 in later versions) on screen. The system could also display four programmable animated screen objects at once - a boon for action games such as Star Raiders, the system’s "killer app" - and it had another custom chip that helped it produce superior sound (four voices, across 3.5 octaves). Two cartridge slots under the hood were available for games and other applications, and four joystick ports were included, too.

While Atari eventually replaced its 8-bit computers with the 16-bit ST line, designer Jay Miner, who led the team behind the Atari 800’s video chips, went on to lead the group that developed the Commodore Amiga 1000’s graphics system.

Like all kids my age, I wanted an Atari 2600 to play games. But my mom thought it would be a good idea to get something that could be educational, so my family decided on an Atari 800. Many a night of head-to-head Star Raiders, Missile Command, and Pac-Man tournaments ensued with my dad (all very educational, of course). But the Atari 800 wasn’t entirely about the games; I also used mine to learn BASIC programming and compose my school papers. For years my memory retained AtariWriter’s string of control codes - conceptually similar to HTML coding - for such common tasks as making text italic or bold. Little did my mom know then where all of that would lead...

Greatest PCs: 13-11 13. IBM Personal Computer/AT Model 5170 (1984)

Three years after IBM’s first PC shipped, the PC/AT marked both a revolution and an evolution in personal computing. The revolution came in the form of powerful specs; the evolution came in the system’s design refinements (no, we’re not talking about its honking big beige box). It was another IBM hit, although it also turned out to be the last IBM model to serve as a standards bearer for the entire PC industry - a year later, Compaq’s Deskpro 386 ended IBM’s stranglehold on PC innovation.

The $5295 PC/AT was the first system to use Intel’s 80286 CPU (first a 6-MHz model and later an 8-MHz model). It also featured a 20MB (or greater) hard disk that was faster than, and had double the capacity of, the PC XT’s original hard drive; supported both 8-bit and 16-bit expansion cards; used IBM PC-DOS 3.0, which supported high-density 1.2MB (5.25-inch) floppy disks; and even integrated a battery on the motherboard to power a real-time clock. Its keyboard, meanwhile, introduced the basic layout we still use today, including a number pad (with cursor keys and a key lock)

and dedicated function keys. And the system could handle advanced graphics with its optional 16-color Enhanced Graphics Adapter (EGA) or 256-color Professional Graphics Controller (PGC).

Like many PC model designations, AT stood for something - and no, it had nothing to do with the Imperial AT-AT walkers featured in The Empire Strikes Back. The term was short for Advanced Technology.

12. MITS Altair 8800 (1975)

Computer historians are still squabbling over whether MITS's Altair was the first true personal computer. (Earlier candidates include the Kenbak-1 and Micral-N.) What's undeniable is that it was "the first machine to really capture the imagination of the geek sector in a big way," says Erik Klein of Vintage-Computer.com. "The fact that other companies quickly jumped onto the bandwagon was proof of its power and allure."

The Altair started life as a $397 build-it-yourself kit - little more than a box, a board, an Intel 8080 CPU (which MITS bought at a discount because of cosmetic blemishes), and 256 bytes of RAM. At first you needed to program it by flipping switches, until Bill Gates and Paul Allen started a tiny company called Micro-soft (yes, with a hyphen) and came up with a version of the BASIC programming language that would work on the system.

Software from Bill Gates wasn't the only thing the Altair had in common with today's systems. Much of the infrastructure that would support later PCs - from disk-drive manufacturers to software developers to computer stores - sprung up to support it. There were even clones, such as the popular IMSAI 8080.

The Altair's time as the dominant computing platform was brief, and in 1978 it was discontinued altogether. But what a legacy it left.

11. Sony VAIO 505GX (1998)

In late 1997 Sony introduced the VAIO PCG-505 in Japan, proving not only that thin was in, but that being thin no longer meant compromising on computing power. The PCG-505 measured just 0.94 inches thick - amazingly slim for the time - and weighed a mere 3 pounds (the chassis was made of magnesium alloy). And when this notebook first hit the United States in the latter half of 1998 as the Sony VAIO 505GX, it spurred an ultraportable revolution.

At $2699, the 505GX didn't come cheap. But it packed in a fair amount of functionality for a compact notebook PC, including a roomy, comfy 10-inch-wide keyboard (1 inch wider than the keyboards of competing subnotebooks of its time). The 505GX improved on the Japan-only version with specs that included a Pentium MMX-266 CPU and a 56-kbps modem. In PC World's tests at the time, the notebook's lithium ion battery lasted 4.7 hours, which we deemed "an adequate figure but hardly stellar."

Sony continued the 505 line with later iterations such as the X505; its current ultraportables, such as the TX line, retain some of the 505's design flair.

Greatest PCs: 10-8 10. Apple PowerBook 100 (1991)

If your first portable computer doesn't succeed, try, try again. That's the lesson of the PowerBook 100, Apple's splendid successor to the famously awful Mac Portable, a machine we named to our list of the 25

worst tech products of all time.

Along with the higher-end PowerBook 140 and 170, the $2500 100 sported two features that the rest of the industry quickly cribbed. First, the company pushed the keyboard back toward the screen hinge, freeing up space for a wrist-rest area that made typing more comfortable. And in the center of that wrist rest sat a nice, large trackball, the best mobile pointing device of its era. (At the time, folks who ran Windows on portable computers were still futzing with unwieldy clip-on trackballs.) Those were just two of the more striking innovations in a slick laptop design that, according to Jim Carlton's book Apple, took the company from last place to first in laptop sales.

The PowerBook 100 - which was, by the way, manufactured by Sony - was discontinued in 1992. But the PowerBook line went on and on, coming to an end just this year, when the final 12-inch PowerBook was replaced by the MacBook.

9. Columbia Data Products MPC 1600-1 (1982)

When IBM created its first PC, it used an Intel 8088 CPU, off-the-shelf parts, and Microsoft's DOS - which meant that other manufacturers could build machines that were at least reasonably compatible with it. They did, and the very first to ship one was Columbia Data Systems.

The $2995 MPC, whose name was short for "Multi Personal Computer," had double the typical IBM PC's RAM, more expansion slots and ports, and two floppy drives rather than one. At the time, Columbia's Fred Conte told InfoWorld that he didn't see the system going head-to-head with Big Blue. "It is a multibillion dollar marketplace, and if we can pick up a small percentage - say, 2 to 3 percent--it will be a luxury," he said.

Columbia's PC soon had lots of company. At the COMDEX show in November 1982, a flurry of what were then called "IBM look-alikes" were announced - so many that the show also saw the announcement of the first magazine specifically "For Second-Generation IBM PCs and Compatibles." Its name? PC World.

By the mid-1980s, Columbia foundered, and though the company still exists, it hasn't built a PC in a long time. But by producing the clone that other clones cloned, the company helped to define the Intel-and-Microsoft platform that dominates to this day.

8. Tandy TRS-80 Model 100 (1983)

Though not quite the first notebook computer - Epson's forgotten HX-20 preceded it - Tandy's Model 100 was the first that caught on. (One thing that didn't catch on: Tandy's desire that the machine be known as a MEWS, for Micro Executive Work Station.)

In a day when most "portable computers" were 25-pound behemoths, the 3.4-pound Model 100 was indeed the size of a notebook, which meant it could go places that computers had never gone before. Yet it packed a 2-by-7.5-inch screen that could display 40 characters across and eight lines of text; a full-size keyboard that's still impressive today; built-in software such as a word processor and spreadsheet; and a 300-bps modem that let you connect to services such as CompuServe.

Variants of the Model 100 included 1984's Model 200, which introduced the clamshell case that almost every portable computer would eventually adopt.

Well into the 1990s, some journalists were still toting these Radio Shack systems - and sites such as Club 100 continue to help people use them.

Greatest PCs: 7-5 7. Commodore Amiga 1000 (1985)

The Commodore 64 may have been the best-selling computer of its time, but its follow-up, developed by a Silicon Valley startup that Commodore acquired, was a vastly better computer. Years ahead of its time, the Amiga was the world’s first multimedia, multitasking personal computer (see an early commercial for it on YouTube).

The $1500 (sans monitor) Amiga came with the same Motorola 68000 CPU used in the Apple Macintosh. But the most innovative thing about its architecture was its three coprocessors - they helped provide the Amiga’s graphics and sound, which were stunning for the time. Its main video processor (dubbed Denise) helped Amigas accomplish feats like 3D animation, full-motion video, and fancy TV processing years before other computers. And the four-voice stereo sound chip (Paula) provided speech synthesis, produced more realistic audio than the Commodore 64’s famous SID chip, and helped inspire Soundtracker, the first "tracker-style" music sequencing program.

The original Amiga was rechristened the Amiga 1000 when it was replaced by the Amiga 500 and 2000 in 1987; later Amiga-based products included the Amiga 4000T tower and the CD32, a gaming console. Commodore declared bankruptcy in 1994, and the Amiga name and technologies bounced from owner to owner in subsequent years. Modern iterations of NewTek’s Video Toaster and LightWave 3D software continue to be used for major TV and movie productions to this day.

In 1987 I had sort of lost interest in PCs - until I got my first real job, which happened to be in an office next to a computer store called The Memory Location. I walked by its window and saw an Amiga 500 showing off everything it could do. And what it could do was astonishing, given that garden-variety IBM PCs often didn’t do color at the time. I collected enough paychecks to buy an Amiga and stuck with the platform until the IBM world caught up - which took years.

6. IBM Personal Computer, Model 5150 (1981)

Many key moments in PC history weren’t identifiable as such when they happened. (Was there any reason to pay much attention when a couple of young guys named Steve decided to start a microcomputer company and name it after a type of fruit?) But when the company that was synonymous with computers announced its first PC on August 12, 1981, everyone knew it was a great milestone in the history of a very young industry.

Technology-wise, the most interesting thing about IBM’s Personal Computer, Model 5150, was its CPU: Intel’s 8088, a powerful 16-bit processor in an era when most popular models still used basic 8-bit CPUs. IBM offered the system with several operating systems, including the then-popular CP/M, something called P-System, and a new OS that IBM named PC-DOS but that most people would remember as MS-DOS for versions marketed by publisher Microsoft. (Legendarily, Microsoft’s OS was based on QDOS, or "Quick and Dirty Operating System," which it picked up for a song from a small Seattle company.)

Within 18 months IBM’s machine sat at the center of a booming PC ecology, with a bevy of hardware add-ons, third-party software, clones, books, and magazines. Some of IBM’s later machines were hits and some were flops, but

all of them, like the vast majority of computers on the planet today, were direct descendants of the IBM Personal Computer. (Read IBM's take on its own archives.)

5. IBM ThinkPad 700C (1992)

Unveiled at Comdex in 1992, IBM's ThinkPad 700C ushered in a new era for laptop computers: Now, the laptop could be both useful and stylish. The first ThinkPad's distinctive black case and its red TrackPoint pointing device in the middle of the keyboard were striking departures from other notebooks, which tended to be practically interchangeable, chunky, dull gray or beige boxes with trackballs that hung off to the side or sat like a lump below the keyboard.

One of three ThinkPad models at launch, along with the 300 and 500 (the numbering scheme was reportedly inspired by BMW's car lines) the $4350 ThinkPad 700C was IBM's top-of-the-line system. It came with an eye-catching 256-color, 10.4-inch TFT VGA color screen (large by 1992 standards), a removable 120MB hard drive, a 25-MHz 486SLC processor, and a comfortable touch-typist-friendly keyboard. Current ThinkPads - now manufactured by Lenovo - may be radically more powerful than the 700C, but they retain the black case, TrackPoint, and fine keyboard as major selling points. (See the ThinkPad's evolution at Lenovo's archive.)

PC World recognized the ThinkPad's significance right away: The product won a World Class award in 1993. In 2004 it became the first - and to date, only - product inducted into the World Class Hall of Fame.

Greatest PCs: 4-2 4. Apple Macintosh Plus (1986)

In 1984 Apple released the original Macintosh, which, while heavily influenced by the Xerox Star, was a breakthrough personal computer. But its 128KB of memory was so skimpy that the machine was virtually unusable. The company really hit the ball out of the park in 1986 with the Macintosh Plus (see the specs of this Apple model and others at Apple-History.com).

The $2599 Mac Plus had the same Motorola 68000 processor as the original Mac, but it came with a roomy 1MB of RAM and was upgradeable to 4MB of RAM. It supported the brand-new 800KB double-sided floppy-disk format, and was the first Mac with a SCSI port for fast data transfer to and from an external hard drive. Like earlier Macs, its cute beige all-in-one case housed a monochrome 512-by-342-pixel display and the 3.5-inch floppy drive. It also came with matching beige input devices: a sturdy keyboard with a numeric keypad connected by a coiled cord, and a boxy, rectangular mouse.

Apple sold the Mac Plus until 1990, making it the longest-selling Mac model ever. By then it had received cult notoriety via a cameo in the movie Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Today, working Mac Plus models sell on eBay for about $25. Nonworking models have found an entirely different afterlife: They've been reincarnated as fish tanks.

3. Xerox 8010 Information System (1981)

As Winston Churchill might have put it, rarely have so many computers owed so much to such a flop. The flop in question is Xerox's 8010 Information System (better known as the Star), the computer that commercialized many of the breakthroughs invented in the company's legendary PARC research labs and first seen in the Alto computer (which was never sold as a commercial product).

Announced in 1981 and shipped in 1982, the Star had a graphical user interface with what-you-see-is-what-you-get graphics and a desktop metaphor (which, as documented at the DigiBarn computing museum, still look impressive today). It used a mouse, a device that was so unfamiliar that Xerox's documentation also called it a "hand-held pointer." It had built-in ethernet networking, and could work with "a 12-ppm laser printer that was three-fourths the size of a washing machine," says Dave Curbow, who joined the Star team as a software engineer in 1983. "There were way too many firsts to enumerate."

It also had a hefty price tag - $16,500 per unit - that was just the beginning, since the whole idea was that a business would outfit itself with multiple networked workstations, servers, and peripherals. "You couldn't buy one machine and do anything," Curbow explains.

Given that the notion of buying even a single small computer was so new at the time, it's not startling that Xerox had trouble selling companies on the Star. A couple of years later, Apple's far cheaper, Xerox-influenced $2495 Macintosh found more success. And over time, virtually every one of Xerox's out-there ideas became a core part of the everyday computing experience.

2. Compaq Deskpro 386 (1986)

For the first few years of the IBM PC-compatible era, the industry had one undisputed leader - Big Blue itself. Then an odd thing happened: Intel introduced the powerful 80386 CPU, its first 32-bit processor, and it was Compaq, not IBM, that brought a 386 PC to market before anyone else.

The Deskpro 386's $6499 starting price wasn't as sky-high as it sounds today considering that decent configurations of IBM's AT cost at least $5000 and its high-end RT usually topped $16,000. With a 32-bit bus and 16-MHz clock speed, "on CPU performance alone the Deskpro 386 inhabits another league," PC World wrote at the time.

In 1986 it wasn't a given that a next-generation PC would run previous-generation software out of the box; the IBM RT, which used a RISC CPU, didn't. And so the fact that the Deskpro ran DOS, Windows, Lotus 1-2-3, and other major applications perfectly was as much of a selling point as the fact it did so with blazing speed.

The Deskpro 386 wasn't just one of the most powerful, most popular PCs of its time - it was also compelling proof that the PC platform was far bigger than any one company.

Greatest PCs: Number 1 1. Apple II (1977)

The Apple II wasn't the first personal computer, or the most advanced one, or even the best-selling model of its age. But in many ways it was The Machine That Changed Everything. On all four of our criteria - Innovation, Impact, Industrial Design, and Intangibles - it was such a huge winner that it ended up as our Greatest PC of All Time.

The 8-bit system came with 4KB of memory, expandable to 48KB. It used a cassette rather than a disk for storage. It cost $1200, about twice the base price of its two biggest competitors, the Tandy TRS-80 Model I and the Commodore PET 2001. It couldn't even display lowercase letters (in the first several years of its existence, anyway). Yet it packed more pure innovation than any other early computer, and was the first PC that

deserved to be called a consumer electronics device.

Born out of the Home Brew Computer Club by Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs's tiny Apple Computer in 1977, the Apple II was the company's second PC, but it boasted more than its share of firsts: It was the first color PC (you could even use it with a television), the first to be easily expandable by users, the first to integrate BASIC programming, and the first to run the VisiCalc spreadsheet - proving that these new boxes had a place in business.

Perhaps its greatest innovation was its design. Jobs wanted the machine to look at home on people's desktops, so he insisted that the Apple II have a sleek look, as opposed to the sheet-metal-and-exposed-wire appearance of most other early PCs. The machine's coolness factor - an Apple trademark to this day - was as important to its long-term success as Wozniak's inventive engineering was.

And we do mean long-term: From the original Apple II model that debuted at the first West Coast Computer Faire in April 1977 to the discontinuation of the final iteration of the IIe in December 1993 (outlasting the 16-bit IIGS model that was introduced years after it), more than 2 million Apple II-family PCs had been produced. The Apple II line, well documented at Steven Weyhrich's Apple II History site, kept the company going through the Apple Lisa debacle and other turbulent events of the 1980s. By the middle of that decade, though, Apple had turned its attention to that other world-beater, the Macintosh Plus (number 4 on our list). But it was the Apple II that put the personal in the nascent personal computer industry. The rest is history.

I didn't own the Apple II; I waited for one of its successors, the Apple IIe, a big, big step up from the very first Apple II. My Apple IIe came with a color screen, a floppy drive, and an 80-column display instead of the original's 40-column display. I have fond memories of using the Apple IIe to index and abstract tech articles, although I could fit only four records on each 5.25-inch floppy, which meant I had to carry stacks and stacks of floppies between home and office. I also remember having a love-hate relationship with the integrated keyboard: Its stiff keys made it a pain to use, sometimes literally.

The 25 Near-Greatest PCs of All Time (1971-1983)

As we whittled down our picks for The 25 Greatest PCs of All Time, we realized that some machines that didn't make the cut were still worthy of celebration. Some were breakthroughs hobbled by drawbacks, some were obscure pioneers, some were intriguing one-trick ponies - but all are worth remembering. Here they are, in chronological order.

Kenbak-1 (1971): Arguably the first personal computer - it was sold for $750 via a tiny ad in Scientific American magazine - this hobbyist kit was so ahead of its time that it had to use TTL (Transistor-Transistor Logic) components, instead of the newly invented microprocessor, to crunch binary code.

R2E Micral N (1973): Developed in France, this system was the first fully assembled, general-purpose computer built around a microprocessor, Intel's 8-bit 8008 chip. And it featured software written by Philippe Kahn, later founder of the Borland software empire.

Commodore PET 2001 (1977): Along with the Apple II and TRS-80 Model 1, this was one of 1977's pioneering trio of PCs aimed at the masses, but its

weird calculator-like keyboard and kludgy all-in-one case made it the crudest of the group. PET stood for Personal Electronic Transactor; rumor had it that the name was also a nod to the Pet Rock craze of the 1970s.

Heathkit H-89 (1979): When do-it-yourselfers wanted to build gadgets in the 1970s, they turned to Heathkit, and this $1800 computer kit made assembling your own color TV passé. It ran either H-DOS or CP/M, included a 90KB floppy disk drive, and was also sold in fully assembled form as the Zenith Z-89.

Epson HX-20 (1981): The forgotten first laptop, Epson’s HX-20 even included a tiny printer in a case that was the same size as the similar, far more popular TRS-80 Model 100.

Osborne 1 (1981): In 1981 the first "luggable" computer was appealingly portable - all 26 pounds of it - and its array of bundled software made it a bargain. Osborne Computer crumbled when it preannounced a new model and customers stopped buying its old ones - a classic business blunder that’s known as "The Osborne Effect" to this day.

Apple Lisa (1983): Call it the proto-Mac: The Lisa sported radical innovations such as a graphical user interface complete with bitmapped fonts, and a mouse. At $10,000 it was more mainstream than the Xerox Star but still too pricey. This model was one of the most important flops ever.

Compaq Portable (1983): A hugely popular luggable PC, this workhorse put a startup called Compaq on the map - and was the first 100-percent IBM compatible clone.

IBM PC XT 5160 (1983): IBM’s follow-up to the PC was another hit. With its Intel 8086 CPU, it was the first 16-bit personal computer. Unlike the original IBM Personal Computer 5150, which used an 8088 processor for its 16-bit processing and an 8-bit data bus to keep costs down, the XT was 16-bit all the way. And its hard drive, all 10MB of it, helped mass storage go mainstream.

More Near-Greatest PCs (1984-1989)

Apple Macintosh (1984): Some people may wonder why the first Mac - the extraordinarily influential system whose development is superbly chronicled at Folklore.org - is on our list of also-rans rather than at the top of our list of the greatest PCs. Blame its placement on its skimpy 128KB RAM, which made it almost unusable. Apple quickly addressed that shortcoming with a 512KB model (the "Fat Mac"), and 1986’s Mac Plus (number 4 on our list of the greatest) made the Mac truly usable.

Hewlett-Packard HP 110 (1984):HP’s first laptop, this 9-pound portable had a flip-up screen, Lotus 1-2-3 and other productivity software stored in read-only-memory, and a whopping (for the time) 272KB of nonvolatile CMOS RAM.

Atari 520ST (1985): Nicknamed the "Jackintosh" after Atari CEO (and Commodore founder) Jack Tramiel, Atari’s first 16-bit PC provided lots of computing power at a low price; its built-in MIDI capabilities made it popular with musicians for years.

Apple Macintosh II (1987): A Mac that draws inspiration from the IBM PC-compatible world? Yep - the II, aimed at business users, was the first Mac in a PC-like case with internal expansion slots, and the first to come with a full-size PC-like keyboard. And it was the first color Mac.

IBM PS/2 Series (1987): Though the PS/2 line was entirely software-compatible with previous AT-Architecture PC models, most PS/2s used Big Blue's proprietary Micro Channel Architecture. The new architecture was incompatible with AT add-in cards - a big stumbling block for widespread industry and buyer acceptance. But the list of innovations for the MCA PS/2s is impressive: They were the first 32-bit personal computers, they had a plug-and-play BIOS, and they introduced the PS/2 keyboard and mouse interface still in use today. They also introduced the VGA graphics standard (a huge step up over its EGA predecessor) and the familiar VGA connector port, which remains the standard plug for most CRT and other analog monitors. Unfortunately, all that new technology kept prices high, and IBM's tight licensing policies kept clone makers from helping to create a new standard.

Atari Portfolio (1989): The first palmtop computer to run MS-DOS, this reasonably priced gadget was about the size of a VHS tape. Atari, foundering at the time, didn't do much with it, but it made a cameo in 1991's Terminator 2: Judgment Day.

NeXT Cube (1989): Steve Jobs's second computer startup after Apple may have failed, but its forward-thinking machine boasted optical storage, a megapixel display, and incredible industrial design - and its operating system evolved into Mac OS X. There's still a market for used Cubes; Black Hole has them starting at $299.

Still More Near-Greatest PCs (1992-2005)

GRiD Convertible 2260 (1992): Better in some ways than current Tablet PCs, this well-designed, extremely sturdy portable could work as a clamshell notebook or a tablet.

SGI Indy (1993): As Unix workstations go, the $5000 Indy was semiaffordable, but it didn't lack for cool features, including a neat pizza-box case, a built-in camera for videoconferencing, and floppies that stored a massive 21MB.

Canon NoteJet 486 (1994): In 1994 Canon made both printers and notebooks. The NoteJet combined the two, building a surprisingly decent inkjet under the laptop's keyboard. Canon bragged that celebs such as F. Lee Bailey, William F. Buckley, and Peter Max were fans.

Commodore 64 (1982): In 1982 64KB was a heck of a lot of memory for a home PC, and the C64 had it. That advantage helped make it the most popular system of its era - maybe any era - with about 30 million units sold over its 11-year production run.

IBM ThinkPad 701C (1995): This subnotebook-like ThinkPad was nicknamed the "Butterfly" because it sported one of the most inventive PC features ever: When you opened it, the keyboard unfolded into a wider size than its small case would otherwise allow for.

Toshiba Libretto 20 (1996): Toshiba's clever, teeny-tiny notebook had a (barely) touch-typeable keyboard and a pointing device mounted near the LCD screen - and it ran Windows 95, too. Arguably, it's a better ultramobile PC than today's UMPCs.

Apple iMac (1998): Welcome back, Steve Jobs. The first iMac may not have been a great computer. Its all-in-one design, however, was unique and influential, and it also started the trend toward lollipop-style colors

for computer cases. Most important, it marked the Mac brand's return to relevance.

Apple PowerBook G4, 17-inch model (2003): This 17-inch wide-screen notebook proved that huge was cool, and its classy aluminum case only heightened its appeal.

Fujitsu LifeBook P1500 (2005): With its touch-sensitive swivel screen and comfortable keyboard, this 2.2-pound featherweight, which runs either Windows XP or Windows XP Tablet Edition, may be the most highly evolved supersmall PC yet.

PC World's 25 Greatest PCs of All Time, by the Decade

1970s 1975 MITS Altair 8800 1977 Apple II 1977 Tandy TRS-80 Model I 1979 Atari 800

1980s 1981 IBM Personal Computer, Model 5150 1981 Xerox 8010 Information System 1982 Non-Linear Systems Kaypro II 1982 Columbia Data Products MPC 1600-1 1983 Tandy TRS-80 Model 100 1984 IBM Personal Computer/AT Model 5170 1985 Commodore Amiga 1000 1986 Apple Macintosh Plus 1986 Compaq Deskpro 386 1987 Toshiba T1000

1990s 1991 Apple PowerBook 100 1992 IBM ThinkPad 700C 1993 Hewlett-Packard 100LX 1993 Hewlett-Packard OmniBook 300 1996 Gateway 2000 Destination 1997 Apple eMate 300 1998 Alienware Area-51 1998 Sony VAIO 505GX

2000s 2001 Shuttle SV24 Barebone System 2002 Apple iMac, second generation 2006 Toshiba Qosmio G35-AV650

The Complete List 1977 Apple II1986 Compaq Deskpro 3861981 Xerox 8010 Information System 1986 Apple Macintosh Plus 1992 IBM ThinkPad 700C 1981 IBM Personal Computer, Model 5150 1985 Commodore Amiga 1000 1983 Tandy TRS-80 Model 100 1982 Columbia Data Products MPC 1600-1 1991 Apple PowerBook 100 1998 Sony VAIO 505GX 1975 MITS Altair 8800 1984 IBM Personal Computer/AT Model 5170 1979 Atari 800 2001 Shuttle SV24 Barebone System 1977 Tandy TRS-80 Model I 1987 Toshiba T1000 1993 Hewlett-Packard OmniBook 300 2002 Apple iMac, second generation 1996 Gateway 2000 Destination 1998 Alienware Area-51 1993 Hewlett-Packard 100LX 1997 Apple eMate 3002006 Toshiba Qosmio G35-AV6501982 Non-Linear Systems Kaypro II

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